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BRITISH REGIMENTS AND THEIR INSIGNIA.

THE time-honoured badges and other devices borne by our British Regiments can boast in many instances of a very interesting origin. This is not only true with regard to the 'white horse,' 'laurel wreath,' or 'castle and key,' which we are accustomed to see set down in almanacs and the like as the badges of certain corps, for there are frequently other distinguishing features that find no place in such lists. These are sometimes of a kind, too, not well calculated to attract the notice of non-military persons; and it is possibly within the mark to say that not one in twenty civilian observers detects, for example, the apparently meaningless bow of ribbon on the back of the collars of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. This much-prized decoration is a unique distinction, without, however, any very heroic history; it is merely a memento of the queue or pigtail which was worn in the army till about 1808.

Among other badges, the same regiment carries the not unusual one of the 'white horse,' above alluded to. Though well enough known, no doubt, to be the 'white horse of Hanover,' it is probably not so widely understood for what reason this device came to be bestowed upon so many of our older regiments. It would appear that in the beginning of the last century the appointments of a good many corps displayed the armorial coat or crest of the colonel-in-chief, who was often a member of the aristocracy, and a territorial magnate in some part of the country. Such marks of distinction on the part of these territorial families, we are told, excited the keen jealousy of the newly-arrived Hanoverians, so much so, that one of the very first steps taken by George I. was to sweep away these family insignia and replace them with his own. Hence, then, the frequency of the white horse as a regimental device.

A regiment of great renown, the Scots Greys, carry as a badge an eagle with outstretched wings—the only device of the kind in the army.

The Greys have enjoyed this unique distinction since the celebrated capture of a French eagle or standard at Waterloo by Sergeant Ewart, who was given a commission for his gallantry. It is a well-earned badge, too, for the Greys have a sort of pre-eminence for taking standards: at Ramillies they captured the colours of the 'Régiment du Roi;' while at Dettingen they took the famous white standard of the French household cavalry. And they are well entitled to the motto 'Second to none,' which they proudly carry. The mention of this motto reminds us that there is another of the kind, though in Latin, in the 'Service:' the Coldstream Guards carry the words 'Nulli Secundus' upon their regimental colour. When the troops were paraded to take the oath of allegiance to Charles II. after the Restoration, the men were ordered to 'ground' their arms. Among others present were the three regiments since known as the Foot-guards; and they were commanded to take up arms as the First, Second, and Third Guards. The First and Third obeyed with alacrity; the regiment of General Monk stood still, to the surprise of the king, who inquired of Monk the reason for their insubordinate bearing. The veteran replied that his regiment declined to be considered second to any other; and, says the legend, Charles remarked: 'Very well; they shall be my Coldstream Regiment of Foot-guards, and second to none.' Hence the motto. General Monk's connection with this corps is commemorated in a curious manner. A small Union Jack is borne on the Queen's Colour of the Coldstream, in consequence of Monk having been an Admiral of the fleet as well as a general. This is a distinction without a parallel in the army.

Almost every one must notice that while officers wear their sashes over the left shoulder, sergeants have theirs over the right. There is one exception, however, to this rule; for the sergeants of the 29th Foot arrange their sashes in precisely the same manner as the officers. Some say that this distinction dates from Culloden, where the regiment is alleged to have had so

many officers slain, that sergeants had to take their places in command of the companies. Another regiment, the 13th, commemorates its terrible loss on the same field in a different fashion: the officers wear perennial mourning in the shape of a black stripe in their gold lace. This kind of perpetual mourning is not, however, peculiar to the 13th. The 65th and 84th have black-edged lace on the officers' tunics, in memory, it is said, of the loss they sustained on the Nive in 1813; and black gloves used to be worn by the 84th to commemorate the same event. Some other corps have the black stripe in their gold lace, but it seems to be very doubtful for what reasons. In certain cases it is supposed to be a symbol of mourning for General Wolfe or Sir John Moore; in others, for heavy losses in action.

At Dettingen, in 1743, the 22d Foot extricated George II. from a somewhat perilous position, in remembrance of which event they wear a small sprig of oak in their caps on the Queen's birthday and other special occasions; and on the 29th of May an acorn is worn by some old regiments, that date being the anniversary of the Restoration. In a similar fashion the 12th and 20th wear a rose on the 1st of August. This floral decoration arises from the tradition, which is well founded, that at Minden these regiments marched through flower-gardens, and most of the men wore roses as they went into action on August 1, 1759. For their prowess at Minden, the 12th, 20th, 23d, 25th, 37th, and 51st regiments were granted leave to carry a laurel wreath on their colours and equipments; and for reasons above alluded to, the 20th have in addition a rose on their standards. Besides the 'Minden wreath,' there is one other instance of the same symbol in the army—it is borne on the colours of the 57th, the 'Die Hards' of Albuera celebrity. A regiment just mentioned, the 12th, together with the 39th, 56th, and 58th, carry the 'Castle and Key,' the motto 'Montis insignia Calpe,' and the word 'Gibraltar,' on account of having taken part in the memorable defence of that fortress from 1779 to 1783.

A famous regiment, the 5th or Northumberland Fusiliers, has a distinction of a curious if not altogether unprecedented variety. In their head-dress the officers and men have a plume red in the upper moiety and white in the lower; and though this may not perhaps seem a matter of much moment, it has a history. At Wilhelmstahl, and again when in St Lucia, the 5th, after sanguinary combats, gathered from the caps of slain French grenadiers enough white feathers to fit out the whole regiment with plumes—an adornment which a while afterwards met with the approval of the authorities. But in 1829 a War Office order gave instructions for the white plume to be more generally adopted in the service; and in consequence of this innovation, the Fusiliers complained that they would lose their well-earned distinction. So the matter at issue was eventually compromised by granting them permission to wear the half-red, half-white plume above mentioned. For reasons never properly explained, the 5th wear a rose on St George's Day.

Besides feathers, other curious trophies are represented in the belongings of this regiment.

At Lucknow they captured an ivory bedstead belonging to the Begum, as well as a great rod or stick of silver. From a part of the former a bandmaster's baton was carved; while the latter was fashioned into a drum-major's staff. Both are still doing duty. This staff, by the way, reminds us of the ivory stick carried on the anniversaries of certain battles by the sergeant-major of the 91st Highlanders. When on the way home from the Cape in 1802, the transport having the regiment on board was charged by a sword-fish, which left its weapon embedded in the side of the vessel. Converted into a walking-stick, the ivory sword accompanied the sergeant-major through the whole of the Peninsular War. The names of the battles in which it was carried are inscribed upon it on plates of solid gold; and it is still carried on parade by the sergeant-major on the anniversaries of these actions.

Somewhat akin to the party-coloured plume of the Northumberland Fusiliers, again, was the red ball which used to appear on the shako of the light company of the 46th Foot. During the battle of Brandywine, in the American War, this company by accurate shooting made great havoc in the ranks of the enemy, who threatened, when they could obtain a favourable opportunity for revenge, to give the marksmen no quarter. In defiance, however, of this menace, and to make themselves more readily distinguished from their comrades, they dyed the ball in their caps red—with blood, according to tradition—in place of the green worn by the rest of the regiment. This distinction was subsequently sanctioned by the War Office authorities.

One more instance of a similar kind, and we are done. The 28th Foot used to have a singular distinguishing feature in their number badge, which was affixed not only on the front, in the usual manner, but also on the back of their caps. On one occasion in Egypt, when rather incautiously drawn up in line, a fierce onslaught was made upon the regiment, in rear as well as in front, by large bodies of French cavalry. There was no time to get into square formation to 'receive' the charging horsemen; but the commanding officer, being a man of resource, shouted, 'Rear rank, right-about-face. Fire!' The men carried out the order with promptitude; standing back to back, they simultaneously beat off both assaults; and to commemorate the affair, they were granted the unique distinction of the duplicate number badge.

BLOOD ROYAL.

CHAPTER VI.—THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING.

DICK slept little that night: he lay awake, despondent. Next day he rose unrefreshed, and by a quarter to ten was in the quad at Durham. Not another candidate as yet had showed up so early. But undergraduates were astir, moving aimlessly across the quad in caps and gowns, and staring hard at the intruder, as one might stare at a strange wild beast from some distant country. Dick shrank nervously from their gaze, hardly daring to remember how he had hoped at Chiddingwick to be reckoned in their number. One

thing only gave him courage every time he raised his eyes—the Plantagenet Leopards on the façade of the buildings. Should he, the descendant of so many great kings—*atavis editus regibus*—should he slink ashamed from the sons of men whom his ancestors would have treated as rebellious subjects? He refused such degradation. For the honour of the Plantagenets he would still do his best; and more than his best, the Black Prince himself could never have accomplished.

He lounged around the quad till the doors of the hall were opened. A minute before that time, Gillingham strolled casually up in sombrero and gray suit and nodded a distant nod to him. 'Morning, Plantagenet,' he said languidly, putting his pipe in his pocket; and it was with an effort that Dick managed to answer as if unconcerned, 'Good-morning, Gillingham.'

The first paper was a stiff one—a feeler on general European history, to begin with. Dick glanced over it in haste, and saw to his alarm and horror a great many questions that seemed painfully unfamiliar. Who on earth were Jacopo Nardi, and Requesens, and Jean Rey? What was meant by the Publication of the Edict of Rostock? And he thought himself an historian! Pah! this was simply horrible! He glanced up mutely at the other candidates. One or two of them appeared every bit as ill at ease as himself; but others smiled satisfied; and as for the Born Poet, leaning back against the wall with pen poised in one hand, he surveyed the printed form with a pleased smirk on his face that said as plainly as words could say it, 'This paper was just made for me! If I'd chosen the questions myself, I couldn't have chosen anything that would have suited me better.' He set to work at it at once, with a business-like air—while Dick chewed his quill pen—evidently flooring every item in the lot consecutively. No picking and choosing for him; he dashed straight at it: Peter the Great or Charles XII., Caesar Borgia or Robespierre, it was all one, Dick could see, to the Born Poet. He wrote away for dear life with equal promptitude on the Reformation in Germany and the Picts in Scotland; he seemed just as much at home with the Moors at Granada as with the Normans in Sicily: he never hesitated for a second over that fearful stumper, 'State what you know of the Rise and Progress of the Bavarian Monarchy;' and he splashed off three whole pages of crowded foolscap without turning a hair, in answer to the command, 'Describe succinctly the alterations effected in the Polish Constitution during the seventeenth Century.' Such encyclopædic knowledge appalled and alarmed poor Dick, with his narrower British outlook: he began to feel he had been ill-advised indeed to measure his own strength against the diplomat's service and the historical geniuses of the Continent.

Well, of course, at midday, he compared notes with their respective performances with Gillingham. All three young men lunched together in the *Saracen's Head*—Dick ordering cold beef and a glass of water, for Mr Plantagenet's example had made him a teetotaler; while the two Rugby boys fared sumptuously every day off tarts, asparagus, fresh strawberries, and claret.

Gillingham had walked through the paper, he averred; a set of absurdly elementary questions. 'I floored Jacopo Nardi,' he remarked with a genial smile, 'and I simply polished off the Edict of Rostock.' Dick, more despondent, went through it in detail, confessing with shame to entire ignorance of more than one important matter. 'Oh, the Poet wins!' Faussett exclaimed, with deep admiration. 'He wins in a canter. I tell you, it's no use any other fellow going in, when the Poet's in the field. It's Gillingham first, and the rest nowhere. He knows his books, you see. He's a fearful pro. at them.'

'Perhaps there's a dark horse, though,' Gillingham suggested, smiling. 'The Prince of the Blood may hold the lists after all, against all comers.'

'Perhaps so,' Faussett answered with a short little laugh. 'But I'll back the Rugby lot against the field, all the same, for a fiver. The rest are rank outsiders. Even money on the Poet! Now gentlemen, now's your chance! the Poet for a fiver! even money on the Poet, the Poet wins; who'll back the Plantagenet?'

Dick coloured to the very roots of his hair; he felt himself beaten in the race beforehand. Oh, why had he ever come up to this glorious, impossible place at all? And why did he ever confide the secret of his intentions to the imprudent head of the house of Plantagenet?

That day and the next day, it was always the same. He sat, and bit his pen, and looked hard at the questions, and waited for inspiration that never seemed to come: while Gillingham, the brilliant, the omniscient, the practical, fully equipped at all points, went on and wrote—wrote, scratching his foolscap noisily with a hurrying pen, straight through the paper. Dick envied him his fluency, his readiness, his rapidity; the Born Poet kept his knowledge all packed for immediate use at the ends of his fingers, and seemed able to pour it forth on no matter what topic, the very instant he required it. Words came to him quick as thought: he never paused for a second. Before the end of the examination, Dick had long ago given up all for lost, and only went on writing at the papers at all from a dogged sense that it ill became a Plantagenet to admit he was beaten as long as a drop of blood or a whiff of breath remained in his body.

The three days of the examination passed slowly away, and each day Dick felt even more dissatisfied with his work than he had felt on the previous one. On the very last evening, he indited a despondent letter to Maud, so as to break the disappointment for her gently, explaining how unequally he was matched with this clever fellow Gillingham, whom all Rugby regarded with unanimous voice as a heaven-sent genius, a natural historian, and a Born Poet. After which, with many sighs, he betook himself once more for the twentieth time to the study of the questions he had answered worst, wondering how on earth he could ever have made that stupid blunder about Aidan and the Synod of Whitby, and what could have induced him to suppose for one second that Peter of Amboise was really the same person as Peter the Hermit. With these and other like errors he made his soul miserable that live-long night; and he worried himself with highly-coloured

mental pictures of the disgrace he would feel it to return to Chiddingwick, no Oxford man at all, but a bookseller's assistant!

Not till twelve o'clock next day was the result to be announced. Richard spent the morning listlessly with Gillingham and Faussett. The Born Poet was not boastful; he hated ostentation; but he let it be clearly felt he knew he had acquitted himself with distinguished credit. Poor Dick was miserable. He half reflected upon the desirability of returning at once to Chiddingwick, without waiting to hear the result of the examination; but the blood of the Plantagenets revolted within him against such a confession of abject cowardice. At twelve o'clock or a little after, he straggled round to Durham. In the big Chapel Quad, a crowd of eager competitors gathered thick in front of the notice-board. Dick hardly dared to press in among them and read in plain black and white the story of his own unqualified discomfiture. He held back and hesitated. Two elderly men in caps and gowns, whom he knew now by sight as fellows and tutors, were talking to one another quite loud by the gate. 'But we haven't seen Plantagenet yet,' the gravest of them said to his neighbour; he was a tall fair man, with a cultivated red beard and a most æsthetic *pince-nez*.

Dick's heart came up in his mouth. He stood forward diffidently. 'My name's Plantagenet,' he said, with a very white face. 'Did you want to speak to me?'

'Oh, yes,' the tutor answered, shaking him warmly by the hand: 'you must come up, you know, to enter your name on the books, and be introduced to the Warden.'

Dick trembled like a girl. His heart jumped within him. 'Why, what have I got?' he asked, hardly daring even to ask it, lest he should find himself mistaken.

The man with the red beard held out a duplicate copy of the paper on the notice-board. 'You can see for yourself,' he answered; and Dick looked at it much agitated.

'Modern History: Mr Richard Plantagenet, late of Chiddingwick Grammar-school, is elected to a Scholarship of the annual value of One Hundred Pounds. *Proxime accessit*, Mr Trevor Gillingham of Rugby School. Mr Gillingham is offered a set of rooms, rent free, in the College.'

The world reeled round and round on Dick as a pivot. It was too good to be true. He couldn't even now believe it. Of what happened next, he never had any clear or connected recollection. In some vague phantasmagoric fashion he was dimly aware of being taken by the tutor into the College Hall and introduced by name to a bland-looking effigy in a crimson gown, supposed to represent the Head of the College; after which it seemed to him that somebody made him sign a large book of statutes or something of the sort in medieval Latin, wherein he described himself as 'Plantagenet, Ricardus, gen. fil, hujus sedis alumnus;' and that somebody else informed him in the same tongue he was duly elected. And then he bowed himself out in what Mr Plantagenet the elder would have considered a painfully inadequate manner, and disappeared with brimming eyes into the front quadrangle.

As yet he had scarcely begun to be faintly conscious of a vague sense of elation and triumph;

but as he reached the open air, which freshened and revived him, it occurred to him all at once that now he was really to all practical intents and purposes an Oxford undergraduate, one of those very people whose gorgeous striped blazers and lordly manners had of late so overawed him. Would he ever himself wear such noble neckties? Would he sport a straw hat with a party-coloured ribbon? He looked up at the big window of that beautiful chapel, with its flamboyant tracery, and felt forthwith a proprietary interest in it. By the door, Faussett was standing. As Dick passed, he looked up and recognised 'the dark horse,' the rank outsider. He came forward and took his hand, which he wrung with unfeigned admiration. 'By Jove, Plantagenet,' he cried, 'you've licked us; you've fairly licked us. It's wonderful, old man. I didn't think you'd have done it. The Poet's such an extraordinary dab, you know, at history. But you must be a dabber. Look here, I say, what a pity you didn't take me the other day when I offered even money on Trev. against the field. You simply chucked away a good chance of a fiver!'

A little farther on, Gillingham himself strolled up to them. His manner was pure gold. There was no trace of jealousy in the way he seized his unexpected rival's hand. To do him justice, indeed, that smallest and meanest of the human passions had no place at all in the Born Poet's nature. 'Well, I congratulate you,' he said with a passing pang of regret—for he too had wished not a little to get that Scholarship; 'as Sir Philip Sidney said, your need was the greater. And even for myself I'm not wholly dissatisfied. It's been a disappointment to me—and I don't very often secure the luxury of a disappointment. The true poet, you see, ought to have felt and known every human passion, good, bad, or indifferent. As pure experience, therefore, I'm not sorry you've licked me. It will enable me to throw myself henceforth more dramatically and realistically into the position of the vanquished, which is always the more pathetic, and therefore the more poetical.'

They parted a little farther down on the way towards the High Street. After they'd done so, the Philistine turned admiringly towards his schoolfellow, whom no loyal Rugby boy could for a moment believe to have been really beaten in fair fight by a creature from a place called Chiddingwick Grammar-school. 'By George, Trev,' he exclaimed with a glow of genuine admiration, 'I never saw anything like that! It was noble, it was splendid of you!'

The Born Poet hardly knew what his companion meant; but if it meant that he thought something which he, Trevor Gillingham, had done was noble and splendid, why, 'twas certainly not the Born Poet's cue to dispute the point with him. So he smiled a quiet non-committing sort of smile, and murmured in a gentle, ^{p so ea}stant voice, 'Aha? you think so?'

'Think so!' Faussett echoed. 'We aim, course I do: it's magnificent. Only—for ^{and stour} of the school, you know, Trev.—I real starink you oughtn't to have done it. You ant ^{to} have tried your very best to lick him.' ^{gaz}

And meanwhile, Dick Plantagenet, ^{himself}, the real hero of the day, was straggling down, more dead than alive for joy, towards the Oxford post-

office, to send off the very first telegram he had ever despatched in his life: 'MISS MAUD PLANTAGENET, Chiddingwick, Surrey.—Hooray, have got it, the hundred pound history.' Thirteen words: sixpence ha'penny. Strike out the Maud, and it's the even sixpence.*

(To be continued.)

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THE BANKERS' CLEARING-HOUSE.

Most people have heard of the Bankers' Clearing-house. It is situated in Post-office Court, which runs between Lombard and King William Streets, and is by no means prepossessing in appearance. Time was, no doubt, when it could boast of being as pleasing to the eye as most of its then neighbours; but *tempora mutantur*—and the Clearing-house has changed for the worse. The dirt of ages has clustered thick upon it; its architectural style has grown hopelessly old-fashioned; while lordly banking halls of granite and of Portland stone have risen and compassed it on every side. It formed, originally, part of the old Post-office, and was first put to its present use some hundred and ten years ago; but how long previous to its adaptation to the purposes of the City bankers its walls were set up the record does not inform us.

The portals of the House are so jealously guarded by a couple of door-keepers that no member of the general public is likely to have an opportunity of witnessing for himself the work conducted inside; and, therefore, the following particulars of the system, from the pen of one who has had considerable experience as a 'Clearer,' may not prove uninteresting.

Each of the twenty-five Clearing Bankers is allotted a desk, over which the name of the firm is displayed in prominent letters. These desks are arranged in alphabetical order, Barclay's being close to the left-hand side of the door, with Brown's, the City Bank, and others for near neighbours. That of the National Provincial is at the far end of the House; and the remaining banks follow in proper sequence until Williams', on the right-hand side of the door, is reached. The number of clerks representing each bank varies considerably; for while such houses as Glyn's and the London and County have as many as eight, a small bank like the London and South-western sends only one during the early portion of the work, and an extra hand about four o'clock, when the busiest time commences. On Stock Exchange 'Settling Days,' when stock-brokers' cheques pass in large numbers through the Clearing-house, and on the 4th of each month, on which day a great many bills fall due, most of the banks increase the number of their representatives, and on these occasions the desk accommodation is by no means sufficient. Some slight relief is afforded by pressing into the service a small room up-stairs; but the arrangement is found to be very inconvenient, and the staff will gladly welcome the day when the Committee of Bankers, in whose hands the management of the House is placed, decides to remove the business to some more commodious structure.

The staff consists of a 'Chief Inspector,' 'Deputy Inspector,' 'Clearers,' and 'Runners.'

The two inspectors carefully scrutinise each clearer's balance-sheet, and mark off its various amounts in order to detect any error that may have arisen. The signature of one is required upon the transfer-form when a balance is to be paid or received, and no small portion of their work is the preparation of elaborate tables setting forth the totals of the vast numbers of cheques and bills passing daily through the House.

The business of the clearers is to enter under the name of the presenting bank the amounts of the cheques and bills—termed in the House 'articles'—drawn upon their own firm. The books in which these entries are made have printed at the head of their columns the names of the various banks; and though the articles have stamped across them the title of the firm presenting, it is no uncommon occurrence for a clearer to enter in his hurry some of them under the wrong heading, and so cause considerable trouble not only to himself but to the clerk who has to balance with him when the work is agreed at the end of the day. The bad figures made by the drawers of cheques are frequently the cause of putting the work wrong; and many a laborious 'tick-up' has to be endured in search of some error which has occurred in consequence of the penchant some people have for making an 8 with a remarkable resemblance to a 5, or writing down a 6 where their intention was to form a mere cipher.

The runners' avocation is to journey frequently between their respective offices and the House, bringing into the latter batches of articles, which they distribute upon the desks of the banks upon whom they are drawn, and returning with those payable by their own firm, and which have been duly entered by their clearers in the 'In-clearing' books.

At the close of business the clearer has brought him the books in which the 'out-clearing articles' were entered before being sent down to the House. The totals of these, with those of his own in-clearing books, he agrees with the other banks, and strikes a balance with each. The balance-sheet has printed in alphabetical order down the middle a list of the Clearing Banks, and on each side of it a money column, that on the left being headed 'Debtors,' that on the right 'Creditors.' The clearer we will say represents the London and County Banking Company; and, starting at the top of the list, proceeds to strike a balance between his firm and the Alliance Bank. He finds, we will assume, that the sum of the Alliance columns in the in-clearing book is, to put the amount in round figures, £50,000, while the out-clearing total is £45,000. This gives a balance of £5000 in favour of the Alliance, and that amount he enters in the right-hand column against the name of that bank. The Alliance clearer, working in the same way, discovers that the London and County Bank owes him £5000, and accordingly inserts those figures in the left-hand column of his balance-sheet. When a similar process has been gone through with the remaining banks, the two sides of the sheet are cast. If the sum of the right side is the larger, the bank has to pay the balance away; if the left exceeds the right, then the operation is reversed. All the Clearing Banks have accounts with the Bank of England, where is also kept the 'Clearing Inspectors' Account,'

the latter being solely used for the purpose of arranging the transfers of the Clearing Banks. Those firms owing balances at the end of the day's transactions authorise the Bank of England to transfer the required amount from their accounts to that of the Clearing Inspectors, from which, in turn, the banks claiming balances are credited with the sums due to them. If there are no errors in the work, the Inspectors' Account will exactly balance; but where a difference exists, the Inspectors have thrust upon them the unpleasant task of searching through the twenty-five balance-sheets in order to detect the mistake.

THE IVORY GATE.*

By WALTER BESANT.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—LE CONSEIL DE FAMILLE (continued).

'It is a peaceful day,' Elsie continued, 'that you pass—for the most part alone—you with your books. Sometimes you come here to call upon your old friend and solicitor, Mr Dering.'

'Sometimes,' he replied, 'We are very old friends. Though his views are narrow.—Where is he?' He looked about the room. 'You are all waiting to see him? He will be here directly. He is always here about this time.'

'Yes, directly. You remember what I said to you on Sunday concerning certain transactions? I told you how important it was to have the exact truth about them.'

'Certainly. I remember. I wrote an account of them for you.'

'You did. Are these papers what you wrote?'

He looked at them for a moment. 'These are my papers,' he said. 'They are what I wrote at your request. They contain a perfectly true account of what happened.'

'Now, before I go on, you will not mind—these people here do not know Mr Edmund Gray—you will not mind my asking a few persons to testify that you are really Mr Edmund Gray?'

'My dear child, ask all the world if you wish; though I do not understand why my identity should be doubted.'

'Not quite all the world.—Mr Carstone, will you tell us the name of this gentleman?'

'He is Mr Edmund Gray, my neighbour at No. 22 South Square, Gray's Inn.'

Mr Edmund Gray inclined his head and smiled.

George went outside and returned, followed by a small company, who, in answer to Elsie, stepped forward one after the other and made answer.

Said one: 'I am the landlord of the rooms at 22 South Square tenanted by Mr Edmund Gray. He has held the rooms for ten years. This gentleman is Mr Edmund Gray, my tenant.'

Said another: 'I am a barrister, and the tenant of the rooms above those held by Mr Edmund Gray. I have known him—more or less—for ten years. This gentleman is Mr Edmund Gray.'

Said a third: 'I am a commissionaire. I remember this gentleman very well, though it is eight years since he employed me, and only for one job then. I went from an hotel in Norfolk

Street, Strand, to a bank with a cheque which I was to cash for him in ten-pound notes. He gave me half a sovereign.'

'Quite so,' said Mr Edmund Gray. 'I remember you, too. It was a cheque for seven hundred and twenty pounds, the particulars of which you have in my statement, Elsie. I well remember this one-armed commissionaire.'

And a fourth: 'I am the laundress who does for Mr Edmund Gray. I have done for him for ten years. This gentleman is Mr Edmund Gray.'

And a fifth: 'I am a news-agent, and I have a shop at the entrance of Gray's Inn. This gentleman is Mr Edmund Gray, of 22 South Square. I have known him in the Inn for ten years.'

To each in turn Mr Dering nodded with a kindly smile.

'Athelstan,' said Elsie, 'will you tell us when and where you have met Mr Edmund Gray?'

'I met him last week in Carstone's rooms on the same landing. He sat with us for an hour or more.'

'It is quite true,' said Mr Dering. 'I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr Arundel on that occasion.'

'I also saw him,' Athelstan continued, 'at a small lecture Hall at Kentish Town on Sunday evening—yesterday.'

'To complete the evidence,' said Elsie, 'I have myself spent many hours almost daily with Mr Edmund Gray during the last fortnight or so.—Is not that true, dear Master?'

'Quite true, my Scholar.'

'Brother—brother'—Sir Samuel touched his arm—'I implore you—rouse yourself. Shake off this fancy.'

'Let him alone, Sir Samuel,' said George—'let him alone. We have not done with him yet.'

'Yes,' cried Mrs Arundel, who had now left her seat and was leaning over the table, following what was said with breathless interest—'let us finish out this comedy or tragedy—as the case may be. Let no one interrupt.'

'I have also met you, sir'—Mr Dering addressed Checkley, who only groaned and shook. 'It was outside a tavern. You took me in and offered me a drink.'

Checkley shook his head, either in sadness or in denial—but replied not, and at the thought of offering Mr Dering a drink, everybody laughed, which was a relief.

'Dear Master,' Elsie went on in her soft voice, 'I am so glad that you remember all these things. It makes one's task so much easier. Why, your memory is as strong as ever, in spite of all your work.—Now, I am going to read the two statements you wrote down yesterday afternoon. Then you may recall anything else you might like to add. Remember, that as regards this first affair, the cheque for seven hundred and twenty pounds, my brother was charged, on suspicion only, with having forged it. Now listen.' She read the brief statement which you have already seen concerning the business of the first cheque. 'That is your history of the affair.'

'Quite so. Dering drew the cheque at my request. I cashed it. I found that I had no need of the notes, and I returned them. That is very simple.'

'It is all so simple that nobody ever guessed it before.—Now we come to the transfers made in

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the spring of the present year. You wrote a second statement regarding them. I will read that as well. Please listen very carefully.'

She read the other statement, which you have also seen already. She read it very slowly, so that there should be no mistake possible. During the reading of these documents Sir Samuel's face expressed every possible shade of surprise. Mrs Arundel, leaning over the table, followed every line. Hilda wept—her head gracefully inclined over her pocket-handkerchief, as if it was an urn.

'This is your account of the business?'

'Certainly. There is nothing more to be added. It is a plain statement of the facts. I do not understand how they could be in any way doubted or misrepresented.'

'Would you, Sir Samuel, like to ask Mr Edmund Gray any question?'

'I don't understand. He says that Mr Dering wrote a letter for him.'

Elsie showed him the letter they had seen Mr Dering write, which he was passing from one to the other.

'Where are the transfers?' Sir Samuel went on. 'He says they were placed by himself in the safe.'

Mr Edmund Gray rose and walked to the safe. He laid his hands upon a packet and took it out. 'These are the papers,' he said.

Sir Samuel opened the roll and looked them over. 'They seem all right,' he said. 'This is very wonderful.'

'Wonderful—and sad—most lamentable,' whispered Lady Dering.

'Wonderful indeed!' Mrs Arundel echoed. 'Most wonderful! most unexpected!'

'A moment more, and I have done.' Elsie again took up the tale. 'Here is a cheque to the order of Mr Dering signed by Mr Edmund Gray for the whole of the money lying in his name at the Bank.—You agree, Master, that it is best for the future that all your affairs should be in the hands of your solicitor?'

'I quite agree.'

'Here is a letter to the manager of the Bank, requesting him to pay over Edmund Gray's dividends to the account of Mr Dering.—And now I think I have proved my case. Here in the safe were the ten-pound notes received by Mr Edmund Gray, and placed there by him. Here were the transfers and certificates placed there by him: you have heard half-a-dozen people testify to the fact that you have Edmund Gray before you. His statement of the business has been read to you. It shows, what no other theory of the case could show, how the thing was really done. Lastly, it shows the absolute and complete innocence of my brother and of George.—Have you anything more to say, Sir Samuel?'

'Nothing—except that I was misled by a statement concerning a profligate life among low companions, without which no suspicion could have fallen upon either of you gentlemen. It was'—he pointed to the unhappy Checkley—'a vile and malignant falsehood. Do you hear, sir? Vile and malignant. It only remains for us all to make such reparation as we may—nothing would suffice, I know, but such reparation as we can—by the expression of the shame and regret that we all feel.'

'Athelstan,' said his mother, 'what can I say? Oh! what can I say?'

Athelstan rose—during the long business he had sat motionless in the clients' chair, his head in his hand. Now he rose and stepped over to his mother. 'Hush!' he said. 'Not a word. It is all forgotten—all forgiven.'

But Hilda sank upon her knees and caught his hands.

'George,' said Sir Samuel, 'forgive me. The case looked black against you at one time. It did indeed. Forgive me.' He held out his hand.

Then there was great hand-shaking, embracing, and many tears. As for Checkley he crept out and vanished in the retreat of his own room. 'It is all over,' he murmured—'all over. I've lost four hundred pounds a year. That's gone. All over—all over!'

Mr Edmund Gray looked on this happy scene of family reconciliation with benevolence and smiles.

Family reconciliations must not be prolonged: you cannot sit over a family reconciliation as over a bottle of port. It must be quickly despatched. Sir Samuel whispered to Hilda that they had better go.

'Come,' said Lady Dering. 'We will all meet again this evening at Pembroke Square—and tomorrow evening—and on Wednesday afternoon.—Elsie, you are a witch and a sorceress and a wise woman. You said that Athelstan should give you away, and he will.—Brother, come with us. Leave Elsie to George.—Oh! how handsome you are looking, my poor ill-used brother! Try to forgive us if you can.'

She turned to Mr Edmund Gray. 'Sir,' she said, 'we ought to be very grateful to you—indeed, we are—for enabling us to clear away the odious cloud of suspicion which had rolled over our heads. It was very good of you to draw out those statements for my sister. But I do think that if Mr Dering had told his old friends about you—about Mr Edmund Gray—we should have been spared a great deal of trouble and unnecessary shame.—Good-day, sir.'

Sir Samuel lingered a moment. He looked as if he would appeal to Mr Edmund Gray as to a brother. 'Don't speak to him,' Elsie whispered. 'Let him alone. He will become himself again presently. Let him alone.'

So he went out, and the door was shut, and Edmund Gray was left alone with George and the Scholar.

'My Master'—Elsie sat down beside him—'I fear you have been interrupted. But indeed it was necessary. Don't ask why. Things get into a muddle sometimes, don't they? You have gathered something of the trouble, too. Now that is all over—past and gone.'

'I am glad for your sake, child.'

'Master—dear Master—I have a confession to make. When I found out who you were—I mean what manner of man you were—my only thought at first was to coax you and wheedle you and flatter you till you gave me exactly the information that I wanted. I confess it. That was my only purpose. Nay—more—for the sake of my lover and my brother I would do it again. Well—I found that the only way to win your confidence was to pretend to be your Scholar and

to believe all you taught. So I pretended. So I won your confidence. So I obtained all I wanted. So I have made it impossible for even the most malignant creature in the world to pretend that these two men had anything to do with what they called a forgery. But—believe me, dear Master—while I pretended, I was punished, because my pretence is turned to certainty.

'Child, I knew it. You could not pretend—no woman could pretend so as to deceive me on a point so simple.'

'Dear Master, you do not know the possibilities of feminine craft. But I pretend no more. Oh! I care not how you make your attempt, whether you destroy Property or not. Mr Dering says that Property is Civilisation—but I don't care. To me it is enough to dream—to know—that there is an Earthly Paradise possible, if only men will think so and will keep it before their eyes, though it be as far off as the blue hills. It is beautiful only to think of it: the soul is lifted up only to think that there is such a place. Keep the eyes of your people on this glorious place, dear Master: make it impossible for them to forget it or to let it go out of their sight. Then, half-unconsciously, they will be running, dragging each other, forcing each other—exhorting each other to hurry along the dusty road which leads to that Earthly Paradise with its Four-square City of the Jasper wall. Preach about it, Master. Write about it. Make all men talk about it and think about it.'

She threw her arms round his neck and kissed him.

'Master, we shall be away for a month or two. Then we shall come back, and I shall sit at your feet again. You shall come and stay with us. We will give you love, and you shall give us hope. I have made my confession. Forgive me.'

They left him sitting alone. Presently he arose, put all the papers back in the safe, and walked slowly away—to Gray's Inn.

Next morning when he opened his letters he found one marked 'Private.' It was from Sir Samuel.

'DEAR EDWARD,' it said—'We are all very glad to tell you that the business of the shares and certificates is now completely cleared up. Checkley is not in any way concerned in it—nor is George Austin. And I am happy to say there is a complete solution of the former mystery which entirely clears Hilda's brother. Under these circumstances, we are agreed that it is best for you not to trouble yourself about any further investigations. You will find in the safe the transfers, a cheque to yourself of all the money received by Edmund Gray, and an order in the Bank concerning the dividends. You have been the victim of a very remarkable hallucination. I need not explain further. Mr Edmund Gray, however, is undoubtedly insane. I hear, and have myself observed, that you have been greatly disturbed and distressed by these mysterious events. Now that they are settled finally—I may say that only a happy chance set us on the right track—we all hope that you will be satisfied with our assurance, and that you will not trouble yourself any more in the matter.—Your affectionate brother,

SAMUEL DERING.'

Mr Dering, after reading this letter, got up and

looked in the safe, where he found the papers referred to. He rang the bell. 'Checkley, who has been at my safe?'

'Nobody but you.'

'Don't tell lies. Who put those papers in the safe?'

'They must have been put there yesterday—you were in the room.'

'Yesterday—what happened yesterday?'

Checkley was silent.

'Who was here yesterday?—Go on, Checkley. Don't be afraid.'

'Sir Samuel was here—and Lady Dering—and Mrs Arundel—and Miss Elsie—and your Partner—and Mr Athelstan. Two or three more came in and went away.'

'That will do. You need tell me no more. I don't want to know the particulars.—Checkley, my day's work is done. I have thought so for some time past. Now I am certain, I shall retire.'

'No—no,' cried Checkley, the tears running down his face. 'Not to retire—after all these years—not to retire.'

'I know now the meaning of my fits of forgetfulness. I have feared and suspected it for a long time. While I am lost to myself, I am going about the world, doing I know not what. And I will not ask. I may be this Edmund Gray who preaches Socialism and gives me his precious tracts. I may be some one else. I say, Checkley, that I know now what has happened to me. Deny it if you can—if you can, I say.'

Checkley did not offer any denial. He hung his head.—'This is the meaning of Elsie's strange hints and queer protestations. Half my time I am a madman—a madman.—Checkley, ask Mr Austin to come to me at once. My day is done.' He closed his open blotting-pad and placed the unopened letters beside it. Then he rose and pushed back his chair—the chair in which he had sat for fifty years and more. 'My day is done—my day is done.'

CHAPTER XXXIX.—THE LAST.

Mr Dering left his office, went back to Gray's Inn, and sat down again before the Ivory Gate. Those who have once sat for an hour or two in this place return to it again and again and never leave it. It is, to begin with, the most beautiful gate ever erected. The brain and wit and fancy of man could never conceive such a gate, could never execute such a conception. It is all of pure ivory, carved with flowers such as never grew; curving and flowing lines leading nowhere; figures of maidens lovely beyond all dreams; philosophers whose wisdom reaches unto the heavens; statesmen who discern the gathering forces and control the destinies of a nation; inventors who conquer nature; physicians who prolong life; ecclesiastics who convert the Carthusian cell into a bower of delight; poets who here find their fantasies divine; men and women in work-a-day dress who wear the faces of the heavenly host.

All the dreamers lie here, not asleep, but dreaming. Their eyes are open, but they do not see each other: they see these dreams. Those of the young who are also generous come here and dream until they grow older and are chained to

their work and can dream no more. Men of all conditions come here—even the little shop-boy—even the maiden who cleans the knives and polishes the boots—all are here. The young Prince is here: the little charity boy is here: the lad whose loftiest ambition is that he may one day stand in the pulpit of the little Baptist village chapel is here: here is the undergraduate who was Captain of Eton and will be Senior Classic and Member of Parliament and Minister—even Prime Minister—and will belong to History. The poet is here, and the painter, and sometimes hither comes the novelist, and, but more rarely, the dramatist. Hither comes the musician to lift up his soul with 'thoughts that only music can give: and the singer, so that he sings more than is apparent from the words: and the actor, so that he puts things into the play never dreamed by him who wrote it. Great is the power, great the gifts, of this noble Gate of Ivory.

Sitting before that gate, such a dreamer as Edmund Gray receives strange visions. He sees clearly and near at hand the things which might be, yet are not, and never can be until man lays down his garb of selfishness and puts on the white robes of Charity. To that dreamer the Kingdom of Heaven, which seems to some so far off and to others impossible, so that they deride the name of it, is actually close at hand—with us—easy to enter if we only choose. He exhorts his fellows to enter with him. And they would follow, but they cannot because they are held back by custom and necessity. They must obey the laws of the multitude, and so they stay where they are. And when the dreamer passes away, his memory is quickly lost, and the brightness quickly leaves those dimly-lighted lives. Yet other dreamers come—every day there arises an Edmund Gray.

Now when Edmund Gray takes the place of Edward Dering, in which guise does the soul, in the end, leave the earth? Are the dreams of Edmund Gray perhaps the logical development of the doctrines held by Edward Dering? Is the present stage of Individual Property—where every man works for himself and his household—one through which the world must pass before it can reach the higher level of working each for all? First men and women hunt, separate: they live apart in hollow trees and caves. Then they live together, and the man hunts for his wife and children. Next, they live in communities, which grow into towns and tribes and nations. Then men rely upon the protection of the law, and work for themselves again. That is our present stage: it has lasted long—very long. Perhaps it will break up some day: perhaps sooner than we think. Who knows? All things are possible—even the crash and wreck of a civilisation which has taken thousands of years to build up. And upon it may come—one knows not—that other stage which now belongs to the dreamer before the Ivory Gate.

The wedding was held then, as Elsie said it should be, shorn of none of its splendours, and relieved of the cloud which had hung over them so long and threatened them so gloomily. Athelstan the Exile—Athelstan the Ne'er-do-well—Athelstan the Profligate—Athelstan the Resident of Camberwell—Athelstan the Smirched and Soiled—stood beside the altar, tall and gallant,

and gave away the bride for all the world to see—nobody in the least ashamed of him. There was not any breath of scandal left. Here he was, returned from his travels, a tall and proper man, dressed in broadcloth, perhaps with money in purse, prosperous and successful in the sight of all. His mother gazed upon him when she should have been looking at the bride or into her Prayer Book. Her eyes were red, but then a mother is allowed a tear or two when her daughter leaves the nest. And as to those who had whispered words about family jars, quarrels and estrangements, or had spoken against the fair fame of the groom, they were now as mute as mice.

All the richer members of the House of Arundel—the City Arundels—were present. One of them—chief partner in a leading firm of accountants—afterwards computed, for the greater increase of the family glory, how many hundreds of thousands of pounds were gathered together at one moment beneath that sacred roof. He counted the members, and made that little addition, during the performance of the ceremony. Those of the Austins who were not disgracefully poor—there are some branches of the family, I believe, pretty low down—were also present. And the company went to Pembridge Square after the service, gazed admiringly at the wedding presents, and drank the health of the bride and bridegroom, and gathered with cousinly curiosity round the returned Prodigal. But they knew nothing—mind you—of his connection with Camberwell. And nothing about his supposed complicity in the Edmund Gray business. There had been, happily, no scandal.

Among the company in the church was Mr Dering. He stood tall and erect, his coat buttoned, his face keen and hard, the family lawyer stamped by nature and long custom.

Presently, when the service was about half way through, a change came over him. His face relaxed: the lines curved just a little laterally, the austerity vanished, his eyes brightened. He took off his gloves furtively and opened his coat. He was Edmund Gray. In that capacity he afterwards drank to the bride and wished her happiness. And he walked all the way from Pembridge Square to South Square; Gray's Inn.

I see in the future an old man growing feeble: he leans upon the arm of a girl whom he calls his Scholar, his disciple, and his child. His face is serene: he is perfectly happy: the Advent of that Kingdom whose glories he preaches is very nigh at hand. He lives in the house of his disciple: he has forgotten the very existence of his lawyer: he goes no more to Lincoln's Inn: always he is lying, night and day, before that miracle of carved work in Ivory. There he watches—it is his Vision—the long procession of those who work and sing at their work and are happy, work they ever so hard, because they work each for all and all for each. And there is no more sorrow or crying and no more pain. What hath the Gate of Horn—through which is allowed nothing but what is true—bitterly true—absolutely true—nakedly, coldly, shivering true—to show in comparison with this? A crowd trampling upon each other: men who enslave and rob each other: men and women and

children lying in misery—men and women and children starving.—Let us fly, my brothers—let us swiftly fly—let us hasten—to the Gate of Ivory.

THE END.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

ONCE more have we arrived at that period of the year when the meeting of the British Association tells us of the progress which scientific knowledge has made during the past twelve months. The meeting this year in the Scottish capital, while it has not attracted quite so many members as was anticipated, has been full of interest, both in the quality of the excellent addresses which have been delivered by the Presidents of the various sections, as well as in the papers on widely divergent subjects which have been read by the members. In glancing through the various subjects dealt with, it would be difficult for any person not to find some topic of interest peculiar to himself.

It would be impossible, as it is unnecessary, to give even a brief review of the various subjects dealt with by the Association; but as an instance of the extent of ground covered by them we will mention two of totally different bearing. The one is a paper on the 'Utilisation of Flowing Water as a Motive-power,' contributed by Messrs Purdon and Walters of London. The motor designed by these gentlemen for the purpose of driving electric, pumping, grinding, and other machinery consists of a pontoon fitted with blades fixed at intervals on an endless chain, passing over vertical wheels. These blades, when the pontoon is anchored, are carried forward by the tide, and so give motion to the wheels. The other paper to which we refer is contributed by Mr W. H. Preece, on 'The Destruction of Lightning-protectors by Recent Municipal Legislation.' In this paper Mr Preece assumes that the extraordinary immunity of private dwellings from lightning-stroke arises from the metal on the roofs together with the draining-pipes in connection with it forming a passage for the electricity to earth. The present system of detaching the pipes from the drains, in order to prevent egress of sewer-gas, must, he believes, do away with this protection, unless at least part of the metal pipe is allowed to bridge over the gap. If Mr Preece's argument be correct, it would seem that our houses have all been furnished with lightning-conductors without our cognisance.

The 'penny-in-the-slot' principle of commercial supply continues to meet with fresh applications. In some parts of Paris a pailful of hot water can be obtained from street standards for a five centime piece. Another phase of the slot-principle will be welcomed by railway travellers, who will presently be able to obtain half an hour's radiance from a three-candle-power electric lamp for the expenditure of one penny. It is said that the Metropolitan District Railway will be the first to have its carriages fitted with the penny-'slot' lamps, which are of the most ingenious construction; but if the scheme prove practicable, all the other lines will be obliged to

follow suit. The substitution of electric lamps fed by a current generated by the moving train, for the old dim oil-lamps, which necessitated so much work in trimming, removing, and lighting, must have already proved as great a saving to the companies adopting it as it has been a comfort to their passengers.

The Pearl-fishery of the Gulf of California forms the subject of an interesting Report contributed to the Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission. The pearl-diver as here described has none of that romance attaching to him which in past times was associated with this occupation. He is simply a submarine labourer, like those who are engaged round our own coasts and in rivers for harbour and bridge construction. He is furnished with the regulation india-rubber suit and brass helmet, and is supplied with air from an attendant boat, so that he can remain at work for an hour or more, instead of the sixty-seconds' plunge into sunlit water which used to be the diver's lot. He gathers the shells into a wire-basket, which is hauled up when full by his companions in the boat. During the summer, the entire eastern coast of California forms the base of operations for the pearl-divers.

A volcanic eruption, which seems only second in severity to the outburst some years ago at Krakatoa, in the Strait of Sunda, occurred in June last at Great Sangir. Some particulars of the disaster have come to us, given in letters from the chief Dutch settlement in the north of the Celebes, from which the scene of the disturbance is distant about three hundred miles. Without any of the usual warnings of a seismic character, a volcano near Tarvena, the capital of the island, suddenly threw out stones of considerable size, which killed hundreds of persons, and caused the light wooden houses common to the country to collapse with the weight of material accumulated on their roofs. Great streams of lava flowed at the same time with awful rapidity down the sides of the mountain, and swept houses and their inmates away in their terrible embrace. The total loss of life is estimated as nearly as it can be at many thousands.

It has long been foreseen that the sailor as Nelson knew him is doomed to extinction, for the work formerly done by his muscular arm is now done by hydraulic and electric power. Even the work of holystoning a ship's deck is to be his no longer, for a machine has been constructed which will move the stone in any required direction over the surface of the boards, and will do the work very much quicker, if not better than it could be done by Jack. The machine is patented by Captain Lowberg of New York.

The chemist to the American Department of Agriculture has recently called attention to a novel system of butter adulteration which is carried out by a preparation called 'Gilt-edged Butter Compound.' The advertisers of this substance claim for it that added to a pint of milk and a pound of butter, the whole being churned together, the product will be two pounds of butter. This result is verified by the trials which have been made with the Compound at the Government Laboratory; but analysis shows that the butter produced contains three times the normal quantity of water and half the proper

percentage of butter-fat. The trick is a most ingenious one, and is explained by the fact that the Gilt-edged Butter Compound contains a large quantity of pepsine, an organic substance which has the property of enabling butter to take up its bulk of milk without materially altering its appearance.

All English-speaking peoples will be gratified to learn that Anne Hathaway's Cottage at Stratford-on-Avon has been purchased for the public by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trustees. For many years this cottage, the home of her who afterwards became Shakespeare's wife, and the scene of his courtship, has been shown to visitors to the shrine at Stratford, but it has been in private hands. It was recently advertised for sale, and ultimately secured by the Trustees, together with the many relics which it contains of him who was 'not for an age, but for all time.'

Mr James Morris of Glasgow has recently discovered a new method of producing Gems artificially, but as yet he has given no details of his method of procedure. He says that the process which he has adopted is a simple one, and that many analogies point to the probability of its being one of those followed in Nature's laboratory. The products which he obtains consist of rounded and compact crystals composed chiefly of alumina. They are transparent, and by special treatment will take a blue colour, and although the bulk of them may be described as sapphires, some at least are believed to be diamonds. These last, however, are much smaller than the chief crystals, which approach one-sixteenth of an inch in diameter, and they have not yet been exposed to those tests which would identify them as diamonds. 'The sparkle of some of these small crystals,' says Mr Morris, 'is magnificent. Carbon is present in the production of all the crystals, and some of the aluminous ones contain a little of that element.' It is not easy to anticipate what would be the result of the discovery of a method by which gems of large size could be manufactured, but certainly it would be one which to many would be most unwelcome.

Two melancholy accidents through balloons becoming ruptured in mid-air have led to experiments being made with a view to save life under such conditions. One aeronaut in France fitted the top of his balloon with a parachute which overspread the upper part of the gaseous envelope. He then made an ascent, and, with marvellous confidence in the value of his improvement, purposely cut the fabric of the balloon and let the gas escape. The parachute then expanded, and the occupants of the car sank slowly and safely to earth. In another experiment, conducted in this country, to show that if the neck-line of a balloon were left untied, the silk envelope would itself form an umbrella-like parachute, the car had no occupants, but was weighted so as to represent a crew of three persons. By means of a fuse and a weight the fabric was automatically slit from top to bottom when the balloon was at a height of three thousand feet, upon which the material assumed the form of an inverted basin and came down gently. It is argued from the result of this experiment that the occupants of a burst balloon would come safely to the ground,

if they only have the presence of mind to cut the neck-line.

Probably one of the most charming exhibits at the coming World's Fair at Chicago will be the Irish Village which is being arranged under the auspices of the Countess of Aberdeen and Mrs Ernest Hart. In this village there are to be seven cottages, in each of which will be carried on a different industry, such as spinning, dyeing, weaving, embroidering, lace-making, &c. There will also be a model dairy, with dairymaids making butter from the milk of real Kerry cows. In this village will stand a 'replica' of Donegal Castle, an old well, and other Celtic memorials.

Photography has long proved of value as an aid to astronomy, and it is a matter of common knowledge that a complete photographic survey of the heavens has for some time been in progress. As a good instance of the manner in which the camera can be used to solve an astronomical problem, we may point to the work recently undertaken by Mr Isaac Roberts, F.R.S., in his search for hypothetical planets existing beyond the orbit of Neptune, which has generally been regarded as the limit of the solar system. Professor Forbes twelve years ago predicted that two such planets exist; and Mr Roberts recently agreed to search for them by photographic methods, if the Professor would point out their supposed position. A chart was made of the region indicated by Professor Forbes, and this was covered by eighteen photographic plates, two sets of photo-plates being taken at intervals of seven days between the exposures. The dual photographs so obtained were then superposed, in order to see if any star appeared on one plate which was not on the other, and to detect any change of position in any particular star which might have occurred in the interval between the two exposures. By this method Mr Roberts was able to assert that there was no planetary body in the region indicated.

Waterspouts are very seldom seen in Britain, but their occurrence is occasionally recorded. In July last much damage was caused by one of these unwelcome visitors, which made its appearance on the Yorkshire wolds in the neighbourhood of Langtoft. After travelling for some distance, its progress was arrested by a hill, upon which it expended its force. After cutting three ditches, two of which were nearly thirty yards long, and about ten feet deep, and scattering the expelled rock, amounting to many tons, the village of Langtoft, lying at a lower level, was inundated by the released water, which formed a volume seven to ten feet in height. Two cottages and a workshop were destroyed; but the loss of life was happily confined to a few pigs, some sheep, and poultry. Curiously enough, a similar visitation occurred on this same hill four years ago.

In a recent Report by the Consul-general of Smyrna several interesting details are given concerning the Sponge-trade of that district. As a whole the industry has suffered a decrease as compared with the year 1890; but while the output of sponges of the fine quality was less, the prices realised were higher; but sponges of an inferior kind were sold at unremunerative rates. Districts which have long been in use are becoming exhausted, and although new fields are being discovered, the produce from them does

not yet compensate for the decreased supply from the old ones. The risks attached to the occupation have increased, for the men are tempted to descend to greater depths than formerly, and as many as eighty fatal accidents are recorded for the past season. This, out of a total of four thousand men employed, is a high percentage. Fishing continues throughout the winter season, but not in the same localities as during the summer. A parasitical weed which infested the sponges some years ago and gave much anxiety is gradually decreasing in quantity.

Rain which on touching the ground crackles and emits electric sparks is a very uncommon, but not unknown phenomenon. An instance of the kind was recently reported from Cordova, in Spain, by an electrical engineer who witnessed the occurrence. The weather had been warm and undisturbed by wind, and soon after dark the sky became overcast by clouds. At about eight o'clock there came a flash of lightning followed by great drops of electrical rain, each one of which on touching the ground, walls, or trees gave a faint crack, and emitted a spark of light. The phenomenon continued for several seconds, and apparently ceased as soon as the atmosphere was saturated with moisture.

In the interesting Cantor lectures on Mine-surveying, lately delivered at the Society of Arts by Mr Brough, much attention was devoted to the divining-rod and its pretensions as a discoverer of hidden minerals, a use to which to a considerable extent it is still put. While the hazel fork or divining-rod cannot be regarded seriously as an aid to the miners, it is of great value in the discovery of iron ore when it takes the form of a magnetic needle, for by noting the inclination or 'dip' of the needle as the ground is traversed, some idea of the extent of the deposit can be formed. An instance is recorded by Professor Le Neve Foster where a bed of iron ore lying below a lake in Sweden was correctly mapped by observations of this kind in winter when the water was covered with ice. This method of surveying has not escaped the keen scent of the fraudulent. In some cases the inclination of the needle has been helped by the approach of a walking-stick containing a concealed magnet, and it is not difficult to make the needle itself give unreliable testimony.

A curious fact connected with the French revenue has been made known. It is forbidden, on the shores of the Mediterranean, to draw any sea-water without a permit from the civil authorities. A well-known Englishman, staying in a villa on the Riviera the garden of which runs down to the sea-shore, could not obtain a pailful of sea-water without permission of the civil power. The story is corroborated by others, who tell us that not a servant or villager can be induced to rob the ocean of a quart of water without permission of the Mayor of the district. The explanation of this apparent anomaly is that the French revenue derives benefit from a tax on salt, and if sea-water were free to all, the peasants would boil it down and make illicit salt.

The terrible disaster at St Gervais by which an hotel and most of its occupants was washed away in the dead of night, has been investigated by different men of science, who do not, however, agree as to the causes which led to

the catastrophe. One theory is that the usual drainage from the glacier from which the disaster undoubtedly originated became either totally blocked or partially obstructed, and that in this way a volume of water was pent up, which gradually acquired sufficient pressure to break its bonds. A more likely theory is that held by Professor Forel, who says that a body of water sufficient to do so much damage could not accumulate in so small a space as that assigned to it. He believes that the disaster was due to the natural movement and breaking-up of the glacier, and that the avalanche consisted of what he calls a lava of ice and water. The ravine shows no trace of any great evacuation of water; but he found the earth mixed with powdered ice, while great blocks of glacier ice were strewn in every direction. The catastrophe was caused then, if this latter theory be adopted, by an avalanche of ice starting at an altitude of ten thousand feet, which was 'pulverised by its fall, a large portion of it being melted by the heat generated in its rapid passage, and contact with matters relatively warm.' The falling mass was further liquefied by mingling with the water which finds its natural outlet at the ravine in question.

THE TURN OF THE WHEEL.

L

'THAT be a relief!' exclaimed Micah Daggles as he threw down his hammer and drew his sleeve across his forehead.

It was striking one o'clock. They could just hear the quarters from the Stent parish church, about a third of a mile from the Rathole.

The other workers in Micah's shop also uttered exclamations of gladness. It was a blazing July day outside the shed. Inside the shed, where three fires were going, blown on by bellows, it was as hot as it well could be without being unbearable. These other workers comprised Mrs Daggles, Ruth Daggles, Adam Gray, and a boy. It was almost a family affair, this chain-shop of the Rathole. Adam Gray, though no relation, in fact, had won Ruth's heart, and was to marry her when—

But this brings us to the pathos of the place. Trade was extremely bad. It had steadily worsened for years. The big chain-factories had swallowed up scores of the domestic workshops. Not absorbed them, giving compensation for so doing; but driven them into extinction by the facilities they naturally obtained for underselling them. What became of them afterwards no one knew. The men and women left the neighbourhood, some well-nigh broken-hearted. The Stent district, though spoilt by these factories, is not without attraction; and after all, home is home, be it a palace in a shire, a hovel in Stent, or a single room in a Whitechapel alley.

The Daggles had come down in the world. Micah's father had been reputed a well-to-do man. The bankers of Stent had treated him with a certain deference that meant much in a pecuniary sense. His bills were always met, with never a word about extended time. There was then, too, a certain rude plenty in the old red house: meat on the table every day, and no lack of bones for the three white bulldogs which

for fully ten years seemed to occupy almost too much of old Daggle's spare time.

But the old man died one day, with a queer sort of smile on his face. 'Mebbe, Micah, thou'lt be a rich man—mebbe thou won't,' he murmured.

This oracular statement did not affect Micah much at the time. But after the funeral—with abundance of feathers, and half Stent at their doors uttering exclamations of rapture—Micah betook himself to the bank in his sleek Sunday clothes, and asked the manager to please to tell him how much money he had inherited. The old man had been mightily reserved. He always drew the wages himself, and attended to cheques and all commercial matters. His son was just a paid employee of his—rather more favoured than the rest of course, but little else. But the banker had merely lifted his eyebrows and said there was nothing in his hands to the late Mr Daggle's credit. There had been once upon a time, he allowed, a matter of thousands; but it had all been withdrawn. He rather fancied the chain-maker had invested it in land, was exceedingly surprised at the deceased man's reticence, and was sorry he could say nothing of a more satisfactory kind for Micah.

Time passed, and affairs stood as they did on this particular day of disappointment. No one knew in the least what had become of old Daggle's money. Micah had questioned every lawyer within ten miles of Stent on the subject, had, in fact, become liable for an astonishing number of six-and-eightpences quite to no purpose. And as the outcome, it appeared he was the heir to nothing in the world but the old workshop, the old red house adjacent, and a strip of soft ground behind, some twenty yards by five, which sloped towards a certain black brook between elder-bushes, famous for the size and number of its rats. Hence the style of the immediate neighbourhood: Rathole.

Micah had married three or four years before his father's death, and Ruth was born. In compliance with local custom, Mrs Daggle, when she was freed from the embarrassments attendant upon little Ruth's birth, had entered the workshop and wielded a hammer with the rest. She was a large woman, of the common Stent type: fond of bright Paisley shawls and drooping feathers to her bonnets, with a very red face, and great arms which made nothing of the ten-pound hammers. And she was not slow to proclaim her opinion that her husband's father had behaved very shabbily in doing away with the money she, in common with others, believed had been saved up for the next generation.

Since then, all sorts of discomfiting events had happened. The first large factory had been established—a huge haunting building of red brick with a tall chimney. Others had followed it; and now daily you might see men and lasses in troops entering the gates of the various works. Trade had languished, and the price of materials had risen, while the ability of Micah's customers to pay enhanced values had gone down. Little by little the old Daggle connection had died off. It was not easy—it seemed almost impossible—to get new patrons. These were secured by the big works. Nor was it easy to get workers to grub and hammer in the pokey little domestic

forge, when in the large establishments they got higher wages, better and a more extensive society, and where the sanitary conditions were better cared for.

Thus, from eight paid hammerers, the workshop had fallen to one—young Adam Gray. The odd lad who took charge of one of the bellows was of small account. Adam Gray was an anomaly in Stent. He had none of the braggart, self-assertive ways of the other chain-makers; nor did he care two pins about pigeon-flying, horse-racing, coursing, or poaching, which were the favourite holiday pursuits of the districts. He was a quiet, almost a moping sort of lad, with long hair and a reflective look. Mrs Daggle did not think much of him; but she forebore to tell him so, fearful lest he, like his predecessors, should straightway give notice. Micah, on the other hand, had a certain regard for the lad. There was something in Adam's face and in such of his mind as he exhibited that convinced Mr Daggle that his assistant was not, as Mrs Daggle playfully expressed it more than once, 'such a fool as he looked.' Adam had a fine pair of brown eyes. He was, besides, strong in the arm and phenomenally industrious.

Ruth Daggle had entered the workshop in her tenth year. That was before state legislation made it penal to employ young girls at hard chain-work. She was a delicate little slip of maidenhood, and Adam from the first resented seeing her little arms bared to such work as she had to do. The attachment that grew up naturally between them increased with the years. Ruth, though distinctly pretty in a fragile way, was almost as shy a girl as Adam was diffident among mankind. The two went about together, much to the amusement of Stent. Mrs Daggle did not appreciate such a courtship. But Micah said: 'Let 'a be—the lad's a good un, and the wench loves him. I'll ha' no comin' between un.' * This was how matters stood in the Daggle household when Micah flung away his hammer and breathed with satisfaction. He adopted the conventional division of the day that Adam might have the less cause for discontent with the lower rate of wages he received, and, for Ruth's sake, received willingly. All four left the workshop as if it were a Purgatory, as in truth it was that day.

'Put on thy coat, wench,' said Micah when he saw Ruth bare-armed to the shoulder, and with her dress open at the throat, inhaling the scant July breeze with avidity. Her little face was sadly pale, and her blue eyes seemed preternaturally large. But ere Micah had finished speaking Adam had anticipated him.

'I dunnot want it, Adam,' murmured the girl as she fidgeted under the cloak.

'You'd catch a cold, else; you are such a one for colds, Ruth.'

A sudden rush of petulance took possession of the girl. It was not wonderful. The poor lass had been worked beyond her strength. Chain-making is never an agreeable employment. The hot days of summer had told upon her.

'I'd like rarely to catch a cold as should carry me right away to the churchyard—that I would,' she exclaimed. Tears broke from the blue eyes as she said these naughty, though not unpardonable words.

Micah looked at his daughter in surprise, and his face assumed an expression of grievous anxiety. None knew better than he how little chance there seemed of excusing Ruth from the work she did in the forge. The bellows must be blown. The lad could not attend to two pair at once; nor could he, Micah, afford to pay another hand. Things seemed almost desperate with him.

'Come, my wench,' he said nevertheless, with a tone of tenderness that in the grimed and wrinkled man was very touching, 'keep up thy heart; joy cometh in the morning, the Book says.—Bring her in, Adam, lad, to her dinner. I wouldn't be surprised, not I, if there was to be a bit of pork on the table to-day. Thou wert allers a good little un for pork, Ruth.'

The girl surrendered herself to Adam.

'I'm so tired,' she whispered. 'I didna mean to bother poor feyther.'

Adam stooped and kissed the pale face, where a tear was beginning to run. 'Your father's right,' he said. 'Never fear; it'll be better by-and-by. I had a black dream last night—it goes by contraries, you know, dear. I'll work the extra this evening, and you shall go at five.'

The tear-dimmed look that Ruth gave him was enough reward to Adam for his offer of self-sacrifice.

Then they went in to dinner, which did in fact include some salt pork with the potatoes. Salt pork, potatoes, and bread do not make up a great meal; but they dined worse three days in the week.

Yet another shock was destined, however, to come upon Micah Daggie that afternoon. They had hardly begun to work again when a black-coated young man appeared with a paper. 'Mr Branstone has sent me with this, Mr Daggie,' he said. 'I'm sorry to have to bring it.'

'What is it, sir?' asked the chain-maker, looking about for his iron spectacles. 'There be no papers due yet awhile.'

'It's about the mortgage. Those people want to build another factory; and unless you can pay, I'm afraid they mean to foreclose, take possession, you know, and just pull down your place.'

'Pull down this 'ere house, which was my gran'feyther's?' exclaimed Daggie.

'That's just it, Mr Daggie. But you must try and find the money.'

'I canna do that, sir. I'd as well hope to find a gold mine. Well-a-day, it be hard!—How much time do they give me?'

'A month, Mr Daggie.'

'One month—only a month. Well, if the Lord dunnot provide in that time, they shall have their will o' me, sir.—I wish you good-day.'

II.

August opened very wet in Stent. The black brook of the Rathole surged in its bed with a riotous music that was never heard except in flood-times. For a week it rained daily—heavy tempestuous downpours, with big drops. It was good weather neither for farmers nor chain-makers.

Micah Daggie and all in his shop were, however, less concerned about the weather than about

the calamity that was impending over them. On the 14th of the month, if money was not found, they would have to go elsewhere.

'It'll just break my heart, though I winna say nowt about it,' said Micah to Adam one day. To which young Gray made no reply. What reply could he have made?

There were snatches of talk between them about America, or joining one of the large factories as paid hands. It would have to be one or the other. There was no money for the passage to New York. The issue, therefore, seemed a foregone conclusion. But it was a sad come-down for Micah, whose father and grandfather had both been independent employers of labour themselves.

'If only,' began Adam one evening as they sat in the gloaming under a stunted old apple-tree, and listened to the tumult of the stream—if only I could get some one to take up this idea of mine!'

Adam had the self-contained temperament of the inventor. He had already made two or three clever improvements in the domestic machinery, which, from his ignorance of common protective measures, had soon become public property. Of late, however, he had, as he fancied, conceived a plan by which chain-production might be increased in a very simple manner. He was so fearful that this also should get appropriated, that he let no one into the secret except just Micah and Ruth. Money was necessary to test it fairly, and he had nothing like enough money for the purpose. Hardly had he said these words, when they both heard a cracking sound. Immediately afterwards Mrs Daggie and Ruth came running down the little puddly garden path.

'Th' house's falling, Micah!' cried Mrs Daggie.

They stood all together by the ancient apple-tree and watched.

A thin smile stole over Micah's face. 'I knew,' he said, 'as my gran'feyther 'ud never let owt but Daggies have to do wi' it.'

'Still, it would be such a pity if it was to break down now,' added Adam. 'It's the damp. There's been crownins' in all over Stent. You know that pub. by Rachel Row, the *Gammon of Bacon*. Well, it sank three feet last Sunday night, and none on 'em knew about it till they got up and found the sitting-parlour windows level with the ground.'

Ruth had instinctively ranged herself by Adam, whose arm, also instinctively, was round her neck.

'Tales like them beant' over-comforting,' observed Mrs Daggie snappishly. 'It 'ud be fine and nice to be wi'out a roof to our heads—in this rain and all.'

They waited for half an hour; then, no further symptoms of collapse having declared itself, they slowly re-entered the house.

'It's a mossul o' one side,' said Micah with a forced laugh as he lurched against the right-hand wall. 'But that's nothing,' he added hastily. 'There's a many houses in Stent as has been like that for years an' years, an' never the worse for it.'

Adam looked dubious, and his eyes wavered between Ruth and the tallow candle in the kitchen, which could be seen guttering at a considerable angle on the table. 'I'll fetch Jake

Carter,' he exclaimed as he snatched up his cap; 'he'll know if it's safe.'

Jake Carter soon came, laughed at the idea that there was any real danger in a house so slightly tilted, and then went away, refusing the glass of beer that was offered to him.

An hour after this the house was wrapped in utter darkness. The Daggles and Adam were all abed, and the heavy rain and the noisy brook echoed about it.

But Jake Carter's wisdom on this occasion was at fault. Towards one o'clock, when the heavens seemed like to be wholly liquidated upon the earth, there was another resounding crack throughout the house, and in an instant the back part of the building, on the side which had already yielded, broke into the ground. The loss of equilibrium sent the chimney-pots flying; and one of the inner walls fell with a crash. The lesser noise of breaking china and sliding furniture could also be heard, followed by a scream from Ruth, and Micah's and Mrs Daggles' voices intermingled.

Adam slept on the ground-floor, in the room in which Micah's father had died. It was just here that the subsidence was most emphatic. He awoke with a sense of calamity upon him, heard the clamour of the general ruin, and was then sensible that his head was much lower than his heels. In this uncomfortable position he heard something else. If it was not the chink of gold pieces in numbers, then his recollection of the sound as he had heard it in the bank when he had changed a cheque for Micah was much disordered for the moment. However, he did not heed this agreeable music. He was much encumbered, and all his wits were necessary to enable him to get out of bed and grovel upon his hands and knees towards the door. Ruth's cries much stimulated him.

An hour passed, and then all the four members of the household were reunited outside in the drenching night. No one was hurt. Ruth had been merely frightened. She was quite calm again, now that Adam had her in charge.

They went to a neighbour's house, where they were given such accommodation as was possible. Here it was that Adam recalled to mind the noise of gold pieces.

'Micah,' he said, 'if there is not money in the house, my hearing is at fault. It was like bagfuls of it breaking against each other.'

At first the chain-maker made light of the matter. 'Thou wert but half awake, lad, an' it was the glasses bursting thou hearest.' Later, however, he suddenly became serious. 'See,' he whispered; 'the daylight is here, an' it doan't rain so much. What dost say—us two'll just step across an' look at th' ould place.'

Mrs Daggles, too, wished to accompany them, mindful of her Sunday gowns, a favourite kitchen clock, and certain other articles she wished to secure from possible ruin. But Micah bade her lie down again and keep Ruth company.

They had much ado to get into the building, and could move in it only on their hands and knees. But the moment they were in Adam's room the truth of his tale was evident. A timber had started from the wall and knocked out several bricks; and with the bricks three boxes had come out. These latter lay in a heap in the sunken corner with a number of sovereigns still

in them. As for the coins that had got dislodged, they were in double handfuls in the corner of the room. There was also another similar box still in the hole whence the others had tumbled, and this, too, proved to be full of gold.

The two men sat on the floor and looked at each other. Adam was the first to speak. 'I knew that good would come of it, Micah; though I'll allow I hadn't much hope how it would come.'

'It's my feyther's savings—there bean't a doubt in the matter,' retorted Micah. 'Praise the Lord, for sure good *hev* come from this evil.'

Then they set to work and collected the coins. They replaced them in the boxes, which were just ordinary workshop boxes for chain-litter, and without lids. And carrying them in their arms, sweetly conscious of their weightiness, they returned to the house, where Mrs Daggles and Ruth lay awaiting them.

'See what we've found, my dears,' cried old Micah joyfully as he plumped his burden upon the floor. 'We're rich for life—all four on us.—An' we'll hev your invention put up in Lunnon, Adam, where they're all fine an' honest, I've heard tell. An' you shall hev the wench here whenever she likes to say "I'll hev you,"'

Adam laughed somewhat shyly. Mrs Daggles was too much occupied with the gold to heed anything else.

'I think, Master,' said Adam, 'I'll be wise to strike while my chance is warm.—Will it be "Yes," Ruth, if I ask you now this very minute?' He took the girl's hand, she assenting, with a happy light in her eyes. 'I've loved you ever since you were a mite—you know I have,' proceeded Adam. 'Will you be my wife for better or worse, Ruth?'

The 'Yes, Adam' of her reply was fully as cordial as the young man could have desired it to be.

There were six thousand five hundred sovereigns in the boxes—quite enough, as Micah said, to set up a big chain-factory if he had a mind to build it. But he preferred to live on the interest of it in a snug house outside Stent. The five hundred pounds that were appropriated to further Adam's invention turned out a remarkably good investment. It did not result in a fortune, but it brought in a very comfortable living for Adam and his wife.

A CURIOUS CALLING.

'WHAT! never heard of a "husher?" Then we'll interview one.'

My friend who made this remark had been employed as an enumerator during the last Census, and his work had brought him into contact with men and women following remarkably curious occupations in order to procure the means of existence. Of these the trade of a husher is certainly not the best known to the general public.

Hushers, I discovered, was a name given to those men who make a living by raking away the accumulated mud from the walls and grubbing and hunting for unconsidered and other trifles in the sickening effluvium of the metro-

politan sewers. The reader might well be pardoned if he imagines that these men are small and emaciated, with pallid countenance and one-foot-in-the-grave appearance. That this is not the case was vouched for by the singularly strong and robust individual we interviewed. He had worked some thirty-five years as a husher, and had never experienced a day's illness in his life. His appearance was so florid and healthy, that I suggested he might be an exception among those who followed this odorous occupation. Not so, however; as a class, these men are remarkably healthy, and escape sickness of all kinds in a manner astonishing. This fact, as true as it is unaccountable, has always been a puzzle to doctors generally. The hushers themselves never tire of declaring they receive great benefit from the gases they inhale in the sewers. Be this as it may, their lot does not seem to be a particularly happy one, although the average earnings of each man in a gang of five or six are better than those of an ordinary artisan.

For several reasons, hushers invariably work in gangs, each gang being accompanied by an old hand, who knows every inch of the ground, and is capable of conducting them all over underground London. Under his guidance—without which they would soon lose themselves—they travel long distances, and are enabled to scour not only the main sewers but also many of the smaller branches. A good lookout man is also posted at the entrance. The absolute necessity of this individual may be judged by mentioning the fact that should a shower of rain come on suddenly, the hushers would, unless warned, be washed into the river.

Until recently, the not very prepossessing entrances to the main sewers could be seen by any one travelling down the river by boat, and the general public could enter them if they so wished. These entrances have now been blocked by the authorities. The hushers are therefore 'barred' by heavy iron gates from entering the main sewers direct, and have consequently to make their way first of all through the smaller passages before reaching their hunting-grounds.

Before commencing operations each man in a gang provides himself with a bull's-eye lantern, a canvas apron, and a pole some seven or eight feet in length, having an iron attachment at one end somewhat in the shape of a hoe. For greater convenience, the lantern is invariably fixed to the right shoulder, so that when walking, the light is thrown ahead; and when stooping, its rays shine directly to their feet. Thus accounted they walk slowly along through the mud, feeling with their naked feet for anything unusual, at the same time raking the accumulation from the walls and picking from the crevices any article they see. Nothing is allowed to escape them, no matter what its value, provided it is not valueless. Old iron, pieces of rope, bones, current coin of the realm, and articles of plate and jewellery—all is good fish which comes to the husher's net.

With 'finds' in the way of coins of course the 'humble penny' predominates. Sixpences and shillings, however, often increase the value of the collection; and at rare intervals—too rare to please the husher—half-sovereigns and even sovereigns are discovered. Like the flies in

amber, the mystery is how they got there. Among other articles of intrinsic worth, silver spoons are most often found, although shirt-studs, diamond rings, silver drinking-vessels, and many other quite-out-of-place articles swell the list from time to time. Lucky finds such as those above mentioned do not deter the husher from keeping a sharp lookout for less valuable articles as they float by. His 'eagle eye' from long practice is capable of judging the worth of the floating refuse before it would be even discernible to the ordinary observer. Mile after mile does the sewer-hunter traverse underground, until a tolerably heavy bag is a result of his labour. Night or day is all one to the husher. Some gangs enter the sewers at night and work on until morning, while others carry out the search only during the daytime. Rats abound everywhere, some of them being of enormous size, large enough to frighten any beginner at the game. The experienced husher, however, takes no notice of them; and the rats are only too pleased to sneak away in the darkness.

When a gang has done a fair day or night's work and leave the sewer, the first business is to sort and divide the spoil. The saleable goods, such as bones, rope, rags, &c., are disposed of to the marine-store dealer; and any articles of silver plate or jewellery are pledged. The proceeds are then added to any money found during the work, and the whole is equally divided among the gang. The average earnings, taking the year through, are about seven shillings per day each man, this sum being greatly exceeded if a man happens to join a 'lucky' gang. This peculiar line of business has not as yet suffered from over-competition.

SOMETIMES.

SOMETIMES, when life seems wonderfully dear,

When heart and spirit bound with untold mirth

For very gladness of our God-given birth,

And all the happinesses round us here;

When blossoms throng our pathway, skies are clear,

And loved and loving ones are by our side,

Until it seems in all the horizon wide

No touch of sorrow ever could appear;

Then sometimes, in a moment, at a word,

Some memory—a child's sad, lonely cry—

The mournful note of some wild stricken bird—

A look of anguish in some dumb thing's eye—

Will fill the heart with such a weight of grief,

That bitter tears alone will bring relief.

FEODORA BELL.

* * TO CONTRIBUTORS.

1st. All communications should be addressed to the 'Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.'

2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.

3d. To secure their safe return if ineligible, ALL MANUSCRIPTS, whether accompanied by a letter of advice or otherwise, should have the writer's Name and Address written upon them IN FULL.

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